

Funds of Knowledge: Luis Moll

Office of Head Start 50th Anniversary

I'm Luis Moll and I'm a professor at the University of Arizona. For several years, we have worked with a concept that we call "funds of knowledge" and funds of knowledge has to do with the knowledge base generated by families on the basis of their experiences, especially their work experiences, their social practices, and their social history. So part of the strategies that we use is to visit households and get to know the families where we become the learners, as opposed to the teachers in that context.

In order to document the knowledge base through, as laid out by the experiences of the families that we are working with. There are several advantages, we think, to such an approach and we are pleased that colleagues, in not only in different parts of the U.S. but in other countries, are using the concept and adapting it to their own realities. And one of the most interesting areas for development on the use of the concept, I think, is through Head Start activities or other early childhood activities and programs, where the teachers could develop the documentation of funds of knowledge, not only with the families but with the kids and also the documentation of funds of knowledge of the teachers themselves.

It is very important, I think, especially in an early childhood or in a Head Start context, to understand how teachers experiences, live experiences, interact with the academic knowledge and pedagogical knowledge and concepts they are supposed to master as professional educators. There is always a filter in acquiring these more academic concepts and that filter are the social and emotional experiences of our lives. So in a sense, the teacher's funds of knowledge become part and parcel of that, of that element needed to assimilate the pedagogical knowledge and become an outstanding teacher.